

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.1973
TO BE ANSWERED ON 12.12.2024

Mining impact on forest and wildlife in Odisha

1973 SHRI DEBASHISH SAMANTARAY:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of findings on the environmental impact of mining activities on forest cover and wildlife in Odisha;
- (b) specific actions taken to mitigate the adverse effects of mining on Odisha's biodiversity, including plans for reforestation and wildlife habitat restoration;
- (c) the number of mining projects in Odisha that have been granted environmental clearances in the last five years, along with any conditions imposed to protect local ecosystems; and
- (d) details of funds allocated for environmental remediation and community welfare programmes in mining-affected areas in Odisha?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH)

(a) to (b) The potential impact on the flora and fauna of the area is evaluated prior to granting approval under the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 and the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. To mitigate or minimize these impacts, a range of measures are prescribed, including compensatory afforestation to offset the loss of vegetation, implementation of a wildlife management plan to address adverse effects on fauna, afforestation in safety zones, and phased reclamation of mined-out areas. All such measures are mandated to be executed at the cost of the project proponent.

As per the provisions of Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980, the prior approval of the Central Govt. is required for using any forest land for non-forest purposes. The Central Government considers the proposals for diversion of forest land on case to case basis and in case the use of forest land is unavoidable, the bare minimum forest land is allowed to be used with appropriate mitigation measures including the Compensatory Afforestation (CA), payment of Net Present Value (NPV), Soil and Moisture Conservation works, Catchment Area Treatment Plan and Wildlife Management plan etc. on case- to-case basis. Further, the guidelines issued by

the Ministry, provide that the mining lease holder shall, after ceasing mining operations, undertake re- grassing the mining area, and any other areas which may have been disturbed due their mining activities and restore the land to a condition which is fit for growth of fodder, flora, fauna, etc.

Further, Environmental Clearances (ECs) are granted under the provisions of the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification, 2006, under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. EIA Notification, 2006 includes four stages of evaluation before grant of Environmental Clearance namely screening, scoping, public consultation and appraisal. The projects/activities are assigned Terms of References based on scoping by the Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC) to prepare Environment Impact Assessment Report (EIA)/ Environment Management Plan (EMP). These reports are then appraised by the EAC as mandated in EIA, Notification, 2006. The EIA/ EMP are prepared by the Project Proponents through accredited consultants.

Environment Management Plan (EMP) as submitted by project proponent through environmental consultant, is based on scientific study by taking into consideration of environment sensitivity such as ecological area, wildlife sanctuary/ National Parks, etc. It also assesses the impact of project activity on nearby habitation/villages. The EIA-EMP reports also include likely impact on water, land and air environment due to upcoming activities including appropriate mitigation measures to minimize the impacts. Based on the evaluation of EIA/EMP report and through discussion/deliberation, EAC recommends the mining projects with certain specific and standard conditions.

(c) to (d) As per PARIVESH portal, between 01.12.2019 and 10.12.2024, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has granted 41 Environmental Clearances (ECs) to Category 'A' projects in the State of Odisha, with certain specific and standard EC conditions stipulated to safeguard local ecosystems including forest, wildlife, air, water and land environment. The details of funds, committed in Public hearing by Project Proponent is specified in the EIA-EMP of the respective projects. For violation projects, funds earmarked for community resource augmentation plan and Environmental remediation plan are also specified in the EIA-EMP report of the project.
